

1. (amended) A method of operating a retail system which includes (i) a plurality of self-service checkout terminals, (ii) a first remote supervisor terminal, and (iii) a second remote supervisor terminal, comprising the steps of:

a¹
(a) operating said first remote supervisor terminal such that said first remote supervisor terminal monitors operation of each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during a first period of time;

(b) maintaining said second remote supervisor terminal in an idle mode of operation such that said second remote supervisor terminal does not monitor operation of any of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during said first period of time;

(c) operating said first remote supervisor terminal such that said first remote supervisor terminal monitors operation of a first group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during a second period of time; and

(d) operating said second remote supervisor terminal such that said second remote supervisor terminal monitors operation of a second group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during said second period of time,

wherein said first group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals is different from said second group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals,

wherein said first remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said first remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said first group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (c), and

wherein said second remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said second remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said second group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (d).

7. (amended) A method of operating a retail system, comprising the steps of:

(a) operating a first remote supervisor terminal so as to monitor operation of a first group of self-service checkout terminals during a first period of time;

(b) operating a second remote supervisor terminal so as to monitor operation of a second group of self-service checkout terminals during said first period of time;

(c) operating said first remote supervisor terminal so as to monitor operation of said second group of self-service checkout terminals during a second period of time; and

(d) operating said second remote supervisor terminal so as to monitor operation of said first group of self-service checkout terminals during said second period of time,

wherein said first group of self-service checkout terminals is different from said second group of self-service checkout terminals,

wherein said first remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said first remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said first group of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (a).

wherein said second remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said second remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said second group of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (b).

wherein said first remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said first remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said second group of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (c)

wherein said second remote supervisor terminal is configured to enable a store employee located at said second remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said first group of self-service checkout terminals via audio, video, and data connection during step (d).

13. (amended) A self-service retail system, comprising[.];

a plurality of self-service checkout terminals for allowing a plurality of customers to checkout items for purchase;

a first remote supervisor terminal electrically coupled via audio, video and data connection to each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals so as to enable a store employee located at said first remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals via said audio, video, and data connection; and

a second remote supervisor terminal electrically coupled via audio, video and data connection to each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals so as to enable a store employee located at said second remote supervisor terminal to communicate with customers respectively located at each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals via said audio, video, and data connection,

wherein (i) said first remote supervisor terminal is configured to monitor operation of each of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during a first period of time, (ii) said second remote supervisor terminal is maintained in an idle mode of operation during said first period of time, (iii) said first remote supervisor terminal is further configured to monitor operation of a first group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during a second period of time, (iv) said second remote supervisor terminal is further configured to monitor operation a second group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals during said second period of time, and (v) said first group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals is different from said second group of said plurality of self-service checkout terminals.
